

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

# Western Region Notes

DECEMBER 16, 2004

## REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE



As 2004 draws to a close, Vickie and I want to wish all of you a joyous holiday season and a happy new year. We very much appreciate all the work you do to make our nation safer and ensure the citizens of this country are provided the weather information they need to both stay safe and to plan their activities. We know those of you in the field who work shift work sacrifice a lot with your families and friends to constantly rotate through your shifts to meet the mission of the NWS. Thanks also to our staff that provide first class hydrological services, keep our equipment and buildings functioning, ensure the large volume of paperwork is kept up to date and bills are paid, to the PMOs who work so closely with the marine community, to the IMETS who put in very long days during fire season to keep the fire fighters safe, and to the regional staff who put in numerous hours to assist the field offices and ensure the agency work is completed.

We have had a lot success this year in providing great service to our customers, savings some lives, preventing injuries, and helping people make better economic decisions. Thanks to all of you for your dedication and great effort to keep our agency strong. And a special thanks to those of you who will have to be away from your family and friends to fill those shifts on Christmas and New Years.

Jim Campbell

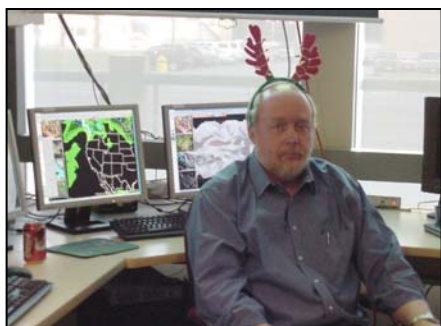


**Coop Observer Receives 50-Year Award:** A luncheon ceremony was held on December 9 at the Martin Hotel Restaurant in Winnemucca, Nevada in honor of Frenchy Montero, a longtime cooperative weather observer from Leonard Creek, Nevada. Frenchy was presented both the John Campanius Holm award and the Edward H. Stoll award for his 50 years of outstanding service and accomplishments as a cooperative weather observer. In addition, certificates of recognition from Nevada State Senator

John Ensign and Nevada State Representative Jim Gibbons were presented. Kevin Baker (WFO Elko MIC), Harold Knocke (CPM regional director), and Troy Marshall (WFO Elko HMT), were present for the ceremony. Members of Frenchy's family also attended, including his son Leonard Montero. Currently the alternate weather observer

for Leonard Creek, Leonard has expressed a desire to continue as a Cooperative weather observer for many years to come.

## AROUND THE REGION



### Photo of the week:

SSD Chief Andy Edman gets in the holiday spirit.

*Happy Holidays*

## METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DIVISION

**Statement of the Week:** This week's statement of the week is a winter storm warning written by MIC Larry Dunn of WFO Salt Lake City. The statement illustrates correct use of headlines now required by NWS Instruction 10-513, which provides a mechanism for national disseminators to be able to parse information which will otherwise be contained in VTEC. The first line following the headline provides additional important information as to where the warning is in effect, and allows the author to use the phrase "The National Weather Service has issued ...". Good work Larry!

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SALT LAKE CITY UT  
1100 AM MST THU DEC 9 2004

.A MOIST PACIFIC STORM SYSTEM WILL IMPACT SOUTHERN IDAHO...NORTHERN UTAH...AND SOUTHWESTERN WYOMING THROUGH TODAY.

ANYONE TRAVELING THROUGH THE NORTHERN UTAH MOUNTAINS AND SOUTHERN IDAHO MOUNTAINS AND EXTREME SOUTHWEST WYOMING SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR SEVERE WINTER DRIVING CONDITIONS.

IDZ025-UTZ007>009-100000-  
WASATCH MOUNTAINS I-80 NORTH-WASATCH MOUNTAINS SOUTH OF I-80-  
WASATCH MOUNTAINS/IDAHO PORTION-WESTERN UTA MOUNTAINS-  
1100 AM MST THU DEC 9 2004

...WINTER STORM WARNING IN EFFECT UNTIL 5 PM MST TODAY...

A WINTER STORM WARNING IS IN EFFECT THROUGH TODAY FOR THE

WASATCH MOUNTAINS OF SOUTHEAST IDAHO AND NORTHERN UTAH AND THE WESTERN UINTA MOUNTAINS.

ADDITIONAL ACCUMULATIONS OF 2-4 INCHES ARE EXPECTED IN THE BEAR RIVER VALLEY WITH 4-8 INCHES IN THE MOUNTAINS.

SNOW...FREQUENTLY HEAVY...WILL CONTINUE THROUGH TODAY. IN ADDITION WEST TO NORTHWEST WINDS OF 25-35 MPH WITH GUSTS OVER 50 MPH WILL CONTINUE THIS MORNING BEFORE DECREASING THIS AFTERNOON. THESE WINDS WILL CAUSE EXTREMELY LOW VISIBILITIES AND WIDESPREAD SEVERE BLOWING AND DRIFTING SNOW.

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*(L to R) Brian Hawkins - NASA,  
Ted Buehner - WFO Seattle,  
Joyce Gross - NOAA Education*

### **National Science Teachers Assn Regional**

**Conference:** The National Science Teachers Regional Conference was held in Seattle at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center on November 18-20. The NOAA Education Office sponsored a booth at the event, which was supported by WFO Seattle and Brian Hawkins of NASA and a former teacher at sea. Over 3300 teachers from around the country and Canada attended the conference. The teachers ranged from middle school to college instructors. They received information about NWS products and services, classroom materials and ideas, and careers in meteorology. One day involved field trips to the Seattle

NOAA campus where the teachers got tours of the WFO, the NOAA Dive Center and the Marine Mammal Museum. About 40 teachers toured the WFO and had the opportunity to learn first-hand about NWS operations, including NDFD and all-hazards NWR.



*(L to R): Nehalem City Manager,  
Mike Nitzsche; Wheeler City  
Manager, John Williams; WFO  
Portland MIC, Steve Todd;  
Manzanita Mayor, Joyce Raker;  
and Manzanita City Manger, Jerry  
Taylor*

### **Oregon Coastal Communities Receive**

**TsunamiReady Certification:** On Thursday, December 9, 2004, WFO Portland conducted a TsunamiReady ceremony in Manzanita, OR to recognize three Oregon coastal communities as TsunamiReady and StormReady. The tri-communities of Manzanita, Nehalem, and Wheeler jointly earned the TsunamiReady and StormReady certification. Officials from Oregon State Emergency Management; the communities of Manzanita, Nehalem, and Wheeler, OR; Tillamook County Emergency Manager; and WFO Portland's MIC (Steve Todd) and WCM, Tyree Wilde participated in the ceremony. MIC Steve Todd presented the

certification to the Mayor of Manzanita, and the City Managers of Manzanita, Wheeler, and Nehalem, OR. These communities are the eleventh in the nation to receive the TsunamiReady certification.



**WFO Salt Lake City Co-hosts Avalanche Open House with Forest Service Utah Avalanche Center:** On November 23, representatives from the Forest Service Utah Avalanche Center, the Utah Department of Transportation, Powderbird, and several ski resorts (The Canyons, Sundance Resort, Snowbird, Alta Ski Area, Snowbasin Ski Resort, Powder Mountain, Brighton Ski Resort, Solitude Ski Resort, and Deer Valley Resort) gathered at the WFO Salt Lake City Office.

The Open House provided an excellent forum to open the lines of communication and promote information exchange among the various Federal, State, and Private Sector agencies that participated.

Forest Service Utah Avalanche Center personnel introduced their new safety program, “Know Before You Go” and described upcoming changes to their website, accessible at: <http://www.avalanche.org>. Located within the WFO Salt Lake City office and working with NWS staff, the Utah Avalanche Center provides critical avalanche information needed to make life-and-death decisions in critical avalanche terrain. Their goal is to “Help keep people on top of the Greatest Snow on Earth instead of buried beneath it.” Larry Dunn, Meteorologist in Charge at WFO Salt Lake City spoke about verification results for the 2003-04 Winter Season, the 2004-05 Winter Outlook from the Climate Prediction Center, and digital forecast services. Presentations on the avalanche/urban interface, access to weather sites, and Wasatch Back country Rescue operations were also given.

## **SCIENTIFIC SERVICES DIVISION**

**NCEP Review:** The 2004 NCEP review was held December 7-9 at the World Weather Building in Washington, DC. The focus of the meeting was improvements to the operational model suite as well as updates on operational and research issues from the national centers and the regions. This year's meeting was unique in the focus on the upcoming shift to the new Weather Research and Forecasting (WRF) modeling framework, which represents a drastic shift in the operational model suite. The WRF program is significant in that it wraps the research and operational NWP community under one model, allowing for more collaboration between the two groups and a greater impact on the performance of the operational models. The transition to the new modeling framework will begin with the North American run of the Eta model (targeted for Fall, 2005), and will eventually replace all of the operational models including the RUC. Because of the unique and importance of this year's meeting, five representatives from Western Region attended the meeting, including Jon Mittelstadt (SOO, Pendleton), Mike Staudenmaier (SOO, Flagstaff), Bill Rasch (Lead, Billings),

Kirby Cook (WR SSD), and Andy Edman (WR SSD) to facilitate the needs of the fields with respect to the new modeling system and help design an optimal evaluation of the new model over the next few months.

**Enhanced IFPS Images on the Web:** The IFPS Web images were enhanced on all WR WFO web pages to include fire weather and marine, plus a number of other technical enhancements. This is a joint project between MDL and WR to develop the IFPS image capability where full resolution (2.5km) images are displayed on the WFO web site while maintaining a similar look and feel with the national NDFD web images.

**NWS/COMET OUTREACH PROGRAM 2005 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:**

The Cooperative Program for Operational Meteorology, Education and Training (COMET) announces its 2005 Outreach Program Request for Proposals (RFP) for Cooperative Projects. More information about submission requirements can be found online at <http://www.comet.ucar.edu/outreach/coop.htm>.

The first draft of the COMET Cooperative Proposal is due to the appropriate NWS region by **January 24, 2005**. The final version must be submitted to the COMET Outreach Program by **March 14, 2005**.

**Teletraining Session for December:** The Virtual Institute for Satellite Integration Training (VISIT) and the Integrated Sensor Training Professional Development Series (ISTPDS) sessions are listed below. Offices can register for the teletraining sessions by sending email to: [visit@comet.ucar.edu](mailto:visit@comet.ucar.edu).

The teletraining calendar is at: <http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/visit/ecal.asp>.

Note: the teletraining planning calendar with sessions by the Interactive Forecast Preparation System PDS team and Warning Decision Training Branch including AWOC teletraining sessions is at: <http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/visit/planning.html>

The added sessions for December are:

- Using GOES to Forecast Winter Storms Part 1 and 2  
(Intermediate, Dec 7,8,14,15)

The objectives of the session are:

- Blend GOES imagery with other available AWIPS products to help improve forecast skill in precipitation associated with winter storms.
- Analyze case studies over various parts of the CONUS

The topics covered are:

- Conveyor belt identification
- Synoptic features (e.g. dry slot, short waves, jet streaks etc.)
- Model divergence
- Mesoscale banding
- Topographic effects



- Shear zones
- Precipitation type (with other datasets)

This session consists of two parts. Both parts must be completed to get a certificate of completion. The VISIT Cyclogenesis session is a prerequisite. If you haven't taken this session, several versions of the session (live teletraining, audio playback, web-based) are listed in the student guide at: <http://www.cira.colostate.edu/ramm/visit/cyclo.html>

**Major Changes at COMET:** COMET has reworked their web site. You can find the new web site at <http://meted.ucar.edu/>

A new COMET web module is available on the theory and use of ensemble prediction systems (EPSs): "**Ensemble Forecasting Explained.**" This module, a part of our series on Numerical Weather Prediction, will help forecasters develop an understanding of the basis for EPSs, the tools used to interpret their performance and output, and their use in the forecast process.

**Learning Management System (LMS) E-learning Library Access:** All Western Region employees now have access to the NETg and Free Course libraries in the DOC/NOAA/NWS LMS. Access to the libraries may be found at: <http://e-learning.doc.gov/noaa/>. If you have difficulty signing onto the site, please contact your SOO or DOH for the correct initial log-in and password. Employees will have access to these libraries through May 31, 2005.

**Advanced Warning Operations Course (AWOC):** The Advanced Warning Operations Course (AWOC) was launched in October by the Warning Decision Training Branch (WDTB). AWOC is the next course in the series that begun with the OSF WSR-88D "in residence" warning training of 1991-1997 and the WSR-88D Distance Learning Operations Course (DLOC) offered to new hires after 1997.

The intent of AWOC is to maintain, refresh, and advance the radar and warning skills of all NWS meteorologists, hydrometeorologists, and hydrologists in an effort to meet our NWS GPRA service goals and provide an effective forecast and warning service to all our customers.

#### **AWOC Course Format:**

AWOC consists of three training tracks. The first track is known as the "Core Track" and provides training on Situational Awareness, Effective Office Warning Strategies, Data Quality, and Societal Impacts and Perception of weather warnings. The second track is the "Severe Track" and provides the latest information on Convective Storm Conceptual Models, Threat Assessment, Storm Interrogation Strategies, and WES Simulations. The third track is the "Winter Weather Track" which is under development and will be available in FY06.

## **Who should take the course:**

### ***WFOs***

- **Meteorologists**: All operational forecasters who have completed the original 3 ½ week OSF radar course or DLOC are required to take all three tracks (Core, Severe Weather and Winter Weather)..
- **HMTs**: AWOC is optional, but encouraged. All HMTs are encouraged to take the “Core Track” at a minimum. HMTs involved with supporting the warning program, or are thinking about preparing to cross over to the 1340 series, are also encouraged to take the “Severe Weather Track”. It is delegated to local management to determine which training tracks the HMTs should complete.

### ***RFCs***

- A special “Hydrology Core Track” is being developed and will be available in February 2005. HAS and other hydrologists directly associated with the flood warning program are required to take this “Hydrology Core Track” only. The course is encouraged, but optional for others.

### ***CWSUs***

- CWSU meteorologists are required to take the “Core Track”. Since CWSU meteorologists should maintain basic radar skills, they are strongly encouraged to take the other two tracks.

### ***New Employees***

- Interns and other new employees in the above categories should take the WSR-88D DLOC course first, then AWOC. The AWOC Core and Severe Weather Tracks will be available in FY06 and beyond for attrition training (new intern training)

**AWOC Training Deadlines**: AWOC is composed of a set of web based modules, teletraining and a few WES training cases. It is important that offices keep up with the training schedule. In WR, we have broken the two track deadlines up into first and second half of FY05. Completion will be tracked by LMS and reported in the WR Professional Development and Training plan.

**March 31, 2005** - Complete Core Track (WFO and CWSUs)

**August 31, 2005** - Complete Severe Weather Track (WFO and CWSUs)

**August 31, 2005** - Complete Hydrology Core Track (RFC's only)

**TBD (probably March, 2006)** - Winter Weather Track (WFO and CWSUs)

**Office Focal Points (AWOC Facilitators)**: The WDTB put an enormous amount of time and effort into producing AWOC. The WDTB provided AWOC and LMS facilitator training for one focal point (SOO, DOH or radar focal point) at each office. The facilitator plays the key role in helping the office with the completion of the WES cases. Each manager should allow time for the AWOC Focal Point to complete these activities.

For more info on AWOC and LMS go to: <http://wdtb.noaa.gov/courses/awoc/index.html>.

## SYSTEMS OPERATIONS DIVISION

**Mount Woodson NWR Transmitter:** The Mount Woodson NWR transmitter (KEC-62) was upgraded this week to a Armstrong G100. The Armstrong was purchased by Western Region and installed by John Myers and Pat Koss, electronics technicians in San Diego.

**Environmental/Safety Program Monthly Call:** The monthly Environmental Compliance and Safety conference call was held on November 23. The topics covered during this call included safety training, the new accident reporting system, the NOAA SPCC/tank data call, and a proposed NOAA Environmental Compliance and Safety Conference. The memorandum formally adopting the web based accident/illness reporting system was signed by the Deputy Assistant Administrator on December 1 and will be distributed electronically to all NWS employees.

**WSR-88D Build 7.0 Systems Test:** The test of build 7.0 resumed on December 1. The system test is covering 162 submitted issues. The legacy portion of the system testing is scheduled to end on January 28, 2005.

**Homeland Security for Federal Facilities:** Sean Wink and Joe Lachacz attended a two day Homeland Security for Federal Facilities in Washington D.C.

**New Armstrong transmitter on Mount Lukens:** Merri Richmond traveled to Oxnard, CA to install and certify a new Armstrong transmitter on Mount Lukens. Steve Kusyj and Gary Strickland assisted.